

IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION  
IN MARYLAND. 2.

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

*Union State Central Committee,*

AT A MEETING HELD IN

TEMPERANCE TEMPLE,

BALTIMORE,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1863.

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1863.

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## UNION STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE,

Wednesday, December 16, 1863.

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The State Central Committee of the Union Party of Maryland met at Temperance Temple on Wednesday, the 16th instant, at noon, Hon. Thomas Swann in the chair.

After calling the roll Mr. Swann addressed the Committee as follows:

### ADDRESS OF MR. SWANN.

*Gentlemen of the Union State Central Committee :*

I have called you together, by request of a large number of Union men, in advance of the meeting of the Legislature, to suggest the propriety of some action on the part of this Committee in reference to the engrossing subject of Emancipation, which now engages the attention of the people of this State. It may be proper for me to state, as an additional reason for this movement, that I have received a communication, from prominent and influential slaveholders of Maryland, urging

the call of a Convention, "to interchange opinions and views upon the absorbing subjects that will be likely to engage the attention of the Legislature, and the Constitutional Convention, which it will certainly authorize the people to call." This request, in the language of the memorial, is made "in a spirit of harmony and conciliation." The period for the meeting of the Convention soon to be authorized by the Legislature is likely to be fixed at so early a day that I deemed it unnecessary to respond to this application, and others of a similar character, further than to endeavor to facilitate the object proposed to be reached by a general meeting of the Union State Central Committee. The State of Maryland having spoken in a manner to indicate the predominant public sentiment upon the issue of Emancipation, there remain, in my judgment, but immaterial differences of opinion, which it should be the desire of all to harmonize, in order that the final action of the State may go forth, without division among Union men, and with the cordial co-operation of all who are now lending their support in putting down this rebellion.

Before the issue of Emancipation was fully introduced into the canvass which has so recently terminated, the Executive Committee, as stated on more than one occasion, stood as a unit upon the propriety of an early effort to change the system of labor in Maryland. In order that my position might not be misunderstood in the relation which I was called upon to assume at the first organization of the Committee, I deemed it my duty to refer to my previous record, and to reiterate the long-standing opinions which I had entertained and freely expressed. The Convention which assembled in Baltimore on the 23d of June, 1863, had nominated two gentlemen for high State offices, without strict reference, it is believed, to the issue of Emancipation, inasmuch as one of these gentlemen was known to be a decided Emancipationist, while the other was claimed to entertain the opposite views. It was, however, no purpose of any member of the Executive Committee, in accepting the trust imposed upon him, to make himself responsible for the opinions of the Convention upon the subject of Slavery, and they were powerless to do more, as events culminated, than to define their position and quietly await the issue of the contest in the State.

The unhappy complications into which parties had drifted, induced many decided Emancipationists—who valued the Union as above Slavery, and who ardently desired a cordial co-operation on the part of the loyal men of every class in the State in the effort to put down this rebellion—to advocate the policy of postponing for a brief season any action upon the subject of Emancipation beyond the call of a Convention, about which

little difference of opinion prevailed among the supporters of the Government in any part of the State. In other words, there were many good Union men who considered it their duty, as true patriots, to ignore all side issues, for the time being, in their paramount desire to save the Union. The people, however, attaching less importance to these considerations, chose to make the issue of Emancipation the prominent and leading issue in the canvass; and their decision must have its weight with all who desire to sustain the Government in this most trying crisis of our public affairs.

Among those who now represent the Union sentiment of the State of Maryland there have prevailed, heretofore, many shades of opinion, both in regard to the general subject of Emancipation, and the most feasible plans for disposing of what remains of Slavery in the State. These differences have arisen as well from the supposed magnitude of the interests involved, as a feeling of humanity, growing out of the helpless condition of the colored race, and the wish to provide for their future comfort. The rapid progress of events as developed in the late popular vote; the unsettled and ruinous condition of affairs which now exists, and which must continue, without hope of relief, until the issue of Slavery has been disposed of; the decided change of opinion which has been wrought in reference to the economy of free over slave labor, and a daily increasing conviction that whatever is done in inaugurating the new system of labor, if we consult the true interests of the State, should be done promptly and without farther delay, than a practical estimate of the difficulties to be encountered may demand—have already so far modified the opinions of many slave holders and others in different parts of the State, as to lead to the hope that upon the issue of Emancipation all conflicting views may now be harmonized.

The results of negro slavery in the agricultural States need not be referred to by me. An experience of more than twenty years, during which time I was an involuntary slaveholder, has left no very favorable impression upon me as to the pecuniary value of this institution. Beyond a limited district in the State of Maryland, it is believed that the cost of maintenance—crediting the women and children, the old and infirm, with the earnings of the more thrifty and able-bodied—has left a very large balance to the debit of the master. These facts, however slow many may have been to realize them, are the more apparent and striking when tested by the standard of prosperity which has attended the results of similar pursuits in other States where free labor has been exclusively employed. If this be so—and that it is so admits of no question—and the State of Maryland having irrevocably decreed the downfall of the institution

within her limits, why should the slaveholder, as a practical question of economy as well as of policy, embarrass himself any longer with negro slavery? Will delay bring back the losses which have been brought upon him by this rebellion?

There is no one in the State of Maryland who has more uniformly advocated the observance of every constitutional guarantee in reference to slave property, and that the amplest justice should be done to all in dealing with it, than the Chairman of this Committee. But I have foreseen that the tenure by which it was held was becoming every day more and more precarious. I cordially endorsed the policy of the President in his recommendation of gradual Emancipation with compensation, because I believed the contest was fast drifting beyond law and constitutional guarantees. The State of Maryland, before this war broke out, represented more than thirty millions, in her slave population; and as it had grown up under the protection of the Federal as well as the State Constitutions, it seemed to me that some consideration should be extended to this large interest. But it is not the less true that all the great interests of the country, both public and private, have been alike seriously compromised by the effects of this rebellion. Every one has suffered more or less. What is my own experience? In an adjoining State, where I represented a large interest, my lands have been laid waste—valuable crops have disappeared before the torch of the incendiary—personal property has been appropriated, without compensation. The march of contending armies knows no restraint. The law becomes powerless when revolutions begin. You may charge upon whom you will the cause of all this anarchy and ruin, but the ravages of a wasting war have done it all; for if there had been no rebellion your domestic relations would not have been interfered with. I charge the responsibility upon the men who have precipitated this rebellion. They are the men upon whom the censure must fall. But what can we do now? That is the practical question. We are in the midst of a revolution. We could not bring back Slavery in Maryland if we desired it. Public opinion has settled the doom of Slavery, because public opinion has associated with it the blood of the gallant men who have fallen in this unnatural strife. It had no countenance at any time but that which the Union gave it. In attempting to break up the Union to throw around it additional safeguards and to widen the area of its power, the States in rebellion have destroyed it altogether; and hard as it is upon the loyal men of the Border States, we are left no alternative but to accept the state of things as we find them. When President Lincoln, more than a year ago, recommended gradual Emancipation, I believed that some plan might have been adopted in Maryland which would

have added a few short years to the life of Slavery. I am not so sure now, as things have progressed, that I was not mistaken in this. Where is the able-bodied man or woman in the State of Maryland, who cannot throw off the yoke of Slavery, without hindrance, in twenty-four hours? The relation of master and slave is totally changed. The slave has become the master—that is to say, he dictates his own terms of labor, or he goes where he can enjoy his unrestrained freedom without interference. Such a system of labor is not only expensive, but it is utterly worthless and unprofitable. Gradual Emancipation, in the present condition of the country and of our own State, means nothing more, in my judgment, than the support by the master of the women and children and those who are unable to work. That is all: for it is evident that in Maryland the negro holds his freedom in his own hands, in the absence of compulsory laws, and to suppose that he is so blind and indifferent as not to make use of it, is hardly to be believed. What does it profit us, then, to talk about gradual Emancipation, when the master has lost all control—when the laws are silent, and a restless public opinion is urging the prompt abolition of Slavery everywhere? There is no disguising the fact that the prejudice against slavery has increased tenfold since the breaking out of this war. It has no kind word from any quarter. You could not enforce the Fugitive Slave Law to-morrow in any State of the Union without bloodshed. These indications are not without their significance. I am reasoning this question for the consideration of my friends in the State. I desire the people to understand how I have been brought to the conclusion that Slavery is dead in Maryland; and if I have modified my views in regard to the interest which the State or the slaveholder may have, in any system of gradual Emancipation, I want it to be understood by what reasons I have been influenced.

But in view of the transition through which we are passing, there are considerations of State policy, as well as of individual concern, which we are not at liberty to lose sight of. Suppose we go on struggling to maintain our hold upon the crumbling fragments of this sinking institution, what will it avail us? How will the public interests of the State fare in such a conflict? It involves the ability of the citizen to make good the demands of taxation, and as a consequence the maintenance of the public credit. The State must prepare for the change through which she is certain to pass—the sooner the better. You want labor and you want capital. You will get neither while this struggle continues. The State in the meantime suffers in her agriculture, in her manufactures, in the development of her various resources—in her general finances, both public and private—every day that she permits this incubus, as it now stands, to be recognized

as a State institution. You can do nothing as a Slave State to better your present condition ; you may do all that you desire, not only to recover from the past, but to give impetus to your prospects in the future, if you get rid of negro slavery at once, and hold out inducements to free white labor to come to your aid. I believe that in ten years the State of Maryland, under a system of free labor, would double both her population, the value of her lands, and her capacity for production.

If it be admitted, then—and who will deny it—that Slavery has reached a point where it can no longer be made useful or profitable—that it has no real or marketable value, in the midst of the embarrassments that surround it—is it not better that it should cease to be recognized as speedily as practicable? Two modes have been suggested for its final removal, both of which I propose to refer to briefly :

1. Gradual Emancipation, extending over, say, three, five, seven, or ten years.

2. Immediate Emancipation, with the chance of compensation by Congress, under the proposition of the President of the United States.

I know there are many who cling to the hope that something may still be done to moderate the burthen which the extinction of Slavery is expected to entail upon a large class in Maryland in the total loss of their capital. But who will not see the utter hopelessness of any such reliance? The object of *time*, in inaugurating a system of free labor, is ostensibly to give to the master the benefit of the labor of his slave until he can adapt himself to the proposed change. But will it do this? Would an ordinance of gradual Emancipation give any more security to the slaveholder than he enjoys at the present moment? A slave who is to be free *five* or *ten* years hence would have no more hesitation in availing himself of his present facilities of escape than if he were a slave for life. Nor would such an ordinance allay for an instant the agitation which is now going on, and which has brought us to this crisis. It is reasonable to assume, from our experience so far, that a very short time will witness the withdrawal of all that portion of the colored race in Maryland whose labor is worth retaining. Family ties, domestic attachments, kindly sympathies, humane treatment, have not retarded heretofore, nor will they retard hereafter, the all controlling desire for freedom. But with the certainty of this result, the advocates of gradual Emancipation will find themselves saddled with the support of all the slave property which has ceased to be available or profitable. So far from being a benefit it would result in positive loss and inconvenience. I can see it in no other light. There is no system of gradual Emancipation that could be made practically useful in relieving

the slaveholder, as things now stand in Maryland ; and it is not probable that he will get any additional safeguard for his protection, either from Congress or the Legislature of his State. It will also be borne in mind that while this experiment of gradual Emancipation is going on all your great interests are at a standstill. Your labor is deficient—your lands are stagnant and unproductive—you are gaining nothing, in fact, but the doubtful value of the slave-labor that may be induced to forego the temptation of freedom and remain with you, against the almost certain and incalculable results that would be likely to follow a Proclamation of immediate and unconditional Emancipation. These are stubborn facts, and it may be, not the most agreeable view that might be presented of this subject. To say that I sympathize deeply with those who will suffer so largely from the immediate effects of this change, I do no more than justice to myself. I am not among the number of those who can lift the voice of exultation and triumph in a time like this. There is no man in the State who has desired more ardently than I have done the wiping out of Slavery ; not, however, by violence and indirection, and a total abnegation of all respect for the claims and feelings of those who are innocently connected with it. I would have extinguished it at any time heretofore, but for my reverence for law and constitutional guarantees, and the rights of property. That the slaveholder should hesitate and hold back, in so trying a crisis, is not to be wondered at, viewing his slave property as he does. The non-slaveholder might do the same if he were similarly situated. I indulge in no crimination of the slaveholder because he does not view this subject in the light that I do, and is not prepared to move as fast as those who are more fortunately situated and have no slave property to stand in the way and embarrass their action.

Now let us consider how immediate Emancipation would affect us. In the first place we are told that the State is being denuded of its labor. That is true. In some districts agricultural pursuits have been almost entirely suspended. How is this drain to be checked ? If negro labor is indispensable until free labor can be substituted—and no doubt much embarrassment has already resulted from the state of things which now exists—the only remedy, it seems to me, is *immediate Emancipation, with wages to the workingman*. Gradual Emancipation, if limited to the shortest period, would not prevent the exodus which is now going on, because the negro has been taught to regard all arrangements affecting his personal liberty as wholly inoperative and void without his consent. You cannot bind him to you for *one* year, much less for a period of *three* or *five* years. He is his own master now, and he knows it. An appeal to a free white laborer to give you his labor for a term of

years without cost, would be quite as effectual as an ordinance of gradual Emancipation binding the slave to a similar arrangement. You must approach the negro in the line of his interest, or your efforts to retain him will be utterly unavailing. A Proclamation of Emancipation, to take effect immediately, with the adoption of some reasonable system of wages or recognized apprenticeship, would at once fix the labor of the colored race as long as you desired to retain it. Nothing else will. In Louisiana the introduction of a tariff of wages has been tried with success, and estates have been worked in this way with profit to the master, where the exodus has been universal in the absence of such compensation. There have been instances, I believe, in our own State where similar inducements have been held out with success. Immediate Emancipation, therefore, while it brings to your aid both labor and capital within a reasonable period, is the only alternative which can be relied upon with any prospect of success to supply the pressing want which is upon you now, and until your present labor is superseded by labor of another class. There is another view to which I would refer in this connection. Immediate Emancipation throws the burthen of the old and infirm, and those who are usually termed supernumeraries, at once upon the State or the General Government; that is certain. The slaveholder is relieved from this heavy weight. It is not for me to estimate the value of this relief. I believe it to be an important element in the view which I am presenting. To the extent of this saving his ability would be increased to provide compensation under the new system. The debit and credit side of the account in the maintenance of a family of negroes is seldom brought into accurate comparison in such manner as to show the actual net profits of slave labor. If you will calculate it, as I have done, charging the great disparity in point of effectiveness in this species of labor, compared with free white labor—the maintenance, in food, clothing, doctors' bills, and other legitimate items of expense—you will find that the capital represented by the ownership of the slave is, at best, nominal. I assert another proposition. I claim that with the admission that slave property is no longer *marketable*, and carries with it no fixed value, (as will be seen by the official inventory of the slaves left by the late Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, estimated at five dollars each,) the slaveholder will fare better under a Proclamation of *immediate* than *gradual* Emancipation, and that he would be a gainer in the end by the employment of free labor, and the dismissal of this large class of useless supernumeraries, who are now a positive tax upon his capital.

Then we are to take into account as the probable effect of the system I am advocating the instant relief from the condition of

uncertainty and ruin which now paralyzes all our plans for the future. You will not begin to date your starting point of reaction while this uncertainty continues. Gradual Emancipation will not aid you. The State will begin to recover when Slavery is finally disposed of, and not before. The time devoted to any gradual system will represent just in the same proportion the continuance of the evils under which you are now suffering. It would be difficult to estimate in figures to what extent the loss of your slave property would be returned to you, in the enhanced value of your landed property—the expansion of your trade—the rapid development of your agricultural, manufacturing, and mineral resources, and the general activity which would be imparted to all the great interests of your State. These public interests are not to be lost sight of in estimating the benefits of prompt and immediate action. Who will deny that the agricultural and manufacturing inducements held out by the State of Maryland compare favorably with those of any other State? And yet it is equally certain that the interests of both have always been ruinously depressed. The lands of the Eastern Shore are intrinsically worth double their present market value—so of other sections of the State. The great mineral resources of some of our Western counties ought to quadruple the returns which they have heretofore made. These drawbacks are not referable to any absence of commercial and other necessary facilities. I devoted the best years of my life in building up a line of inter-communication between the waters of the Chesapeake and the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. We have stretched our arms to every convenient point of profitable commercial interchange. Our system of internal improvements is more complete than that of any other State. In salubrity of climate Maryland is certainly without a rival. Why, then, with all these advantages in our favor, have we not gone on and prospered, as the Free States have prospered, in wealth and population? The explanation is not difficult. The cause is to be found in the habits of our people. The tide of immigration has heretofore found its way to the great West and Northwest. Slavery has been the stumbling block here. The foreign immigrant will not settle himself where Slavery exists. He will not trust his capital in a Slave State. While others are pressing forward—while every department of industry in the Free States is pregnant with life and animation and progress—he sees that we are lagging behind. We are content to sit with our hands before us and suffer the negro to work for us *and to ruin us*. That, is the whole story. It is a sad story but it is not the less true. How many young men, brought up under our present system, educated to lean for support upon slave labor, have found themselves at years of

maturity, bound hand and foot to a few scanty acres of poor land, it may be, with the superadded incumbrance of a patrimony of worthless negroes thrown upon them for support during the period of their natural lives? The future has no prospects for them. *The master is the slave, in fact.* It is no painted picture that I draw. Virginia, as she stood before the war, with her decayed agriculture, her silent and deserted water-courses, her neglected commerce, her dissolving and idle population, sufficiently attests its truth, and my own State of Maryland, too long indifferent to the warnings of experience, is only now beginning to wake up to its startling reality. In deciding between immediate and gradual Emancipation we must determine whether it is our purpose to put an end at once to these untoward and withering influences, or whether they shall be permitted to continue undisturbed for a few years longer, without resulting benefit, that I can see, to the well-being of the State. Slavery has long ceased to exist, anywhere within our borders, in any relation which can make it useful or profitable to the people. On the contrary, it has become a stumbling block which, the longer it is suffered to remain, the greater will be the injury it is certain to entail both upon the State and all who are connected with it. The change has been decreed and must come sooner or later. Our action is limited to a mere question of time. Our lands must be subdivided and prepared for the new system of labor—the more speedily the better. Immigration and capital must be brought to our aid. We can accomplish nothing by delay, when we know that all our efforts to advance must be fruitless so long as Maryland continues in the category of Slave States.

It would be difficult to speculate as to how far the subject of compensation to the slaveholder may form an element in this calculation. If it comes at all, which I sincerely hope it will, and that speedily, it will never be by way of *condition* to induce us to do that which we can no longer avoid. We are equally powerless, with or without compensation. In estimating, however, the inducements for prompt and decisive action on the part of our people in inaugurating the new system of labor, I indulge the hope, based upon sympathies which are believed to exist in high official quarters, that the liberality of Congress may be induced to show itself in a becoming effort to share with the slaveholders of our State the pecuniary burthen which the withdrawal of their labor may entail upon them in the beginning—especially as the recommendation of the President of the United States in regard to compensation is still pending; and the action of the Convention may be carried into effect within the limit of time fixed by the proposed legislation of Congress at its last session. Such an appeal would certainly

not be without its advocates among the Representatives of the Free States. It will have my most cordial co-operation and efforts to secure its success. Whatever may be my views of the ultimate good effects of a change in our system of labor, it cannot be denied that there would be loss and inconvenience to the slaveholder in the beginning; and this, apart from the views which have been presented of the practical value of the institution, ought to entitle him to the consideration of Congress, besides which the depreciation in the value of slave property has not been brought about by any agency of the loyal States.

With these views, frankly expressed and actuated by a sincere desire to promote harmony, as well as to facilitate what I believe to be the true interests of the State, I have called a meeting of this Committee, in the hope that it may lead to such interchange of opinion as may establish some principle for your guidance in the future. However you may dispose of this subject, in the vote which you will be called upon to give, I shall feel that, as your Chairman, I have done my duty. The subject is not new to me. For more than twenty years I was myself a slaveholder—involuntary, it is true, but a slaveholder—with all the responsibilities which the institution entails upon those who are connected with it. For fifteen years before these relations terminated I proclaimed freedom to all under my charge who would avail themselves of the offer, retaining at the same time those who claimed my protection. I thank God that I am rid of the whole responsibility now. I am not a believer in a negro slavery. I have always viewed it as a dead weight upon our people. In its pecuniary results I am yet to be satisfied of any practical benefit that can be claimed for it, situated as we are here in Maryland. Of its value and relations elsewhere I do not pretend to speak. When I look upon the future of this vast country, I confess myself unable to grapple with subjects which must soon tax the wisdom, prudence and foresight of our ablest statesmen. More than four millions of this degraded race, or as the President terms it in his Message, "landless and homeless" race, unfitted for the duties of self-control, are now crowded together within the narrow limits of the Gulf States—to be still more circumscribed as this war goes on—to await the result of a conflict which is to decide the destiny of this great Republic. Nor is that result doubtful. What is to be their fate? Where is the statesman who will paint the bow of promise upon that dark horizon? I am not here to attempt to solve that problem. Let us rather pray for guidance and direction; but above all, in setting our own house in order, let us renew our pledges to each other—be the result of these complications what they may—that this great experiment of free Government must be sustained; and we must stand or fall as one people and one nationality.

Mr. Swann having concluded his remarks, submitted the following resolutions for the action of the Committee :

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland, by a decided vote of her people in the election which has recently taken place, has declared herself in favor of calling a Convention with especial reference to the abolishment of Slavery within her borders, upon some plan, either immediate or gradual, which shall best conduce to the public welfare and avert the ruinous condition of affairs growing out of this rebellion, which has resulted from the almost total loss of the effective labor on which she has heretofore depended—paralyzing her most profitable pursuits, and greatly embarrassing the enterprise and industry of her citizens—with no prospect of relief so long as this state of things is permitted to continue ; and,

WHEREAS, Slavery has ceased to exist in the State of Maryland, in any practical relation which can commend it to the favor either of the State or those immediately connected with it ; and it is well established that slave property has not only no real or marketable value now, but must become a positive drawback, in the midst of events that are daily occurring ; and that serious inconvenience, if not suffering, has already resulted from the large number of supernumeraries left with the slaveholder for support, which from necessity will be compelled to look for relief elsewhere ; therefore,

*Resolved*, That this Committee will favor the call of a Convention, through the agency of the legislature about to assemble, at the earliest practicable day compatible with the Constitution and laws of the State, and the adoption by said Convention of some plan of *immediate Emancipation*, as best calculated to subserve both the interests of the State and the holders of slave property in the present ruinous condition of affairs.

*Resolved*, That this Committee, in favoring immediate and prompt action, not only in the early call of a Convention, but the adoption of a line of policy which shall relieve the State from the damaging influences under which she is now suffering—from the state of suspense and confusion which exists within her borders—entertain the belief that the *only* remedy is the immediate Emancipation of the negro race, with such a system of wages, or apprenticeship, as shall be deemed advisable, to guard against too sudden a revulsion in the inauguration and establishment of the new system of labor.

*Resolved*, That the recommendation of the President of the United States, in offering the aid of the Government to such of the loyal Border slaveholding States as shall adopt an Ordinance of Emancipation, was eminently just and equitable, and should be brought to the attention of Congress by the people of

the State, through their representatives in that body—not as a condition of any plan of Emancipation which it may be their pleasure to adopt—but as a measure of justice to those who have been connected with the institution of Slavery, under the assurances of protection heretofore held out to them by the guarantees of the Constitution.

### REMARKS OF HON. J. P. KENNEDY.

Mr. Kennedy rose to express his unqualified approbation of the very able and conclusive argument of the Chairman in favor of the views he had just given of the policy proper to be adopted by the State at the present juncture. The Chairman, he said, is entitled to the thanks of the Committee for this careful exposition. He hoped it would be read and maturely considered by every citizen of the State, as he was sure it would carry a most valuable conviction to the mind of every reader. He was prepared also to give his hearty concurrence to the resolutions offered by the Chairman, as in every respect most appropriate to the occasion. He had himself prepared some resolutions which he designed to offer to the consideration of the Committee, which he thought might meet their approbation. They are, he said, in no respect in conflict with those proposed by the Chairman, but they present the subject now agitating the public mind in a somewhat different point of view from those of the Chairman, which necessarily were restricted to the subject embraced in his address. What he (Mr. K.) was now about to offer, were perhaps of a more comprehensive character, and were addressed to a view of the questions before the country from a position of broader aspect than the resolutions just read by the Chairman. He hoped that the Committee would be able to adopt both as their exposition of the sentiments which the present crisis had brought into public discussion; and that the Committee would give their sanction to each set of resolutions separately, sending them forth to the Union party of the State simply as the opinions of the Committee respectfully commended to the consideration of their friends, by whom he meant that large body of citizens throughout the State who were determined to support the Union through every emergency, and to persevere with unabated zeal in resistance to this rebellion until it was utterly crushed out.

Mr. Kennedy then read his resolutions as follows:—

This rebellion, and the disastrous civil war in which it has involved our country, having been instituted professedly for the purpose of protecting and perpetuating Slavery, and of extending it over the free communities of the National territory, has so utterly failed in its object, that now, after nearly three

years of desolating warfare, characterized by such suffering and sacrifice as have scarcely a parallel in the annals of civilized nations, it has not only destroyed the guarantees which the Constitution of the Union and the tolerance of public opinion had heretofore given to Slavery, but has, in fact, virtually abolished the institution, by forcing it into conditions that render it valueless to the slave-owner and an incumbrance to the society in which it exists.

The exigency thus produced by the folly of the leaders of the rebellion, has presented to the people of Maryland, and especially to that portion of them who are yet nominally the owners of slaves, a crisis in which it has become their duty, no less than their most urgent necessity, to confront this momentous change in the great domestic interests of the State, and to adopt a policy in conformity with its requirements. Therefore,

*Resolved, as the opinion of the Central Committee, That the time has arrived when it has become the inevitable duty of the General Assembly to make immediate provision for the substitution of free for slave labor, and to adopt measures which shall enable the people to effect an early, lawful and complete extinguishment of slavery in Maryland.*

*Resolved, That from the date of the Revolution down to a recent period the general sentiment of Maryland, as illustrated in the opinions of her wisest and most approved statesmen, and as expressed in the familiar convictions of her people, regarded Slavery not only as a great moral blemish in the composition of our social condition, but as a most pernicious element in retarding the growth and prosperity of the State, and that therefore the highest considerations of policy and good government required its removal by a judicious course of legislation. That this almost universal opinion of the fathers of our polity has only yielded to the malign influence exercised upon a later generation by the profitable expansion of Slavery attendant upon the great and rapid enlargement of the culture of cotton in the Southern States, and the consequent increased value of slave property as an article of Southern demand. That but for this stimulus operating upon the cupidity of the less scrupulous and larger number of proprietors of slaves throughout the Border States, Slavery would long since have been expelled from Maryland, in obedience to the better judgment of our earlier day. That since this change in the estimate of its material value, Slavery has been sustained, encouraged, and guarded by successive legislative acts of such rigorous infliction as strongly to awaken the attention of the people to the increasing evils of the institution; of which not the least is discovered in its power to promote a system of class legislation, which has, in a greater or less degree, disturbed the harmonious relations of the differ-*

ent interests of the State by an unequal and unjust distribution of political power, by odious discriminations between the privileges and immunities conferred upon the owners of slave property and those accorded to the rest of the community, and by its tendency to give an undue predominance to the slaveholding interest in the management of the public affairs.

*Resolved*, That as these influences have been gradually gaining strength in the State, they have in the same degree engendered a fancy that Maryland is connected by peculiar affinities with the distinctive interests and policy of the planting States of the South; whilst, in fact, Maryland, with the single exception of her toleration of a cumbersome, expensive and inefficient system of slave-labor, which she has ever had the strongest motives to abandon, is, in no view of her condition as a prosperous and thriving community, to be regarded in the light of a Southern State. Neither her commerce, nor her manufactures, nor her great mineral resources are any farther dependent upon Southern support than those of any other State in the Union; whilst her great agricultural interest has scarcely a single incident to connect it with the South. The landholder of Maryland does not produce one staple commodity which finds a market in the South worthy of any comparison with its importance in Northern, Western or foreign commerce. The great system of public works in the State, upon which she has expended more than fifty millions of money, all tend Westward or Northward, and the completion of these works has more than quadrupled her commercial capital. It is her great privilege to boast of her central position, from which she may proudly claim an exemption from all sectional prejudice, and assert her right to be respected and valued as the very heart of the Union, in sympathy with every sentiment and interest of the nation which truly and honestly supports the indissoluble integrity of the whole circle of the United States. That, so far from having any participation in or sympathy with the peculiar policy of the planting States, she has had constant reason to complain that in those States alone has she found the only persevering and unyielding antagonist to those measures of the National Government in which her own prosperity is most deeply involved.

*Resolved*, That under the pressure of the exigencies of this unprovoked civil war—which, like every war conducted within the territory occupied by a slave population, necessarily and inevitably disorganizes and destroys the relation between the owner and the slave, by affording the latter the opportunity of escape from thralldom,—and in any event stirring up in his bosom that uncontrollable love of freedom which utterly dispels his enforced habit of subordination—the people of Maryland

find themselves suddenly called upon to provide for this new emergency, which can only be met by accepting the fact of the demolition of Slavery as a present and irresistible reality. The events of the day are thus leading them back to the traditional wisdom of their fathers on the necessity of organizing a more vigorous and useful system of labor as a substitute for that which is no longer within their choice, even if they desired to retain it. They are conscious that if they do not adjust this question upon the basis of speedy Emancipation, it will soon adjust itself without their assistance; and that, therefore, it is prudent to subject the course of Emancipation and its incidents to the guidance and control of law, rather than allow it to disturb the order and economy of society by shaping its own career. That the recognition of this necessity gives additional strength to that prevailing conviction so strongly manifested in the late election which seems to have decreed the promptest action of the State to rid the people of the incumbrance of Slavery henceforth and forever.

*Resolved*, That this Committee, in consideration of all these reasons, look with satisfaction to the prospect of an early call of a Convention of the people by the Legislature, for the purpose of authorizing, preparing and digesting a plan for the immediate Emancipation of the slaves held in this State, the future prohibition of Slavery, and for the organization of the labor of the population which shall be made free by that measure. That they regard it as a matter of the highest moment to every citizen of the State that, in the prosecution of its labors to this end, the Legislature should be sustained by the liberal and cordial support of the people, and every assistance afforded it by counsel and co-operation to enable it to perform the work assigned to it in such a manner as shall promote harmony amongst conflicting interests, and secure the people from all future excitement and agitation of a topic which has proved itself to be the only one capable of seriously disturbing the peace of the most beneficent Government known to human history.

After the reading of these resolutions, Mr. Price rose to express his entire and full concurrence in the sentiments which had been expressed by the Chairman, and by his colleague from Baltimore—Mr. Kennedy. He was prepared to vote in favor of both sets of resolutions at once. The two sets were entirely consistent with each other, the one—the Chairman's—taking a view which might be said to be confined to the topics of his excellent speech, the other—Mr. Kennedy's—treating the questions from what might be called an outside view, to which Mr. Price heartily assented.

Mr. Stockett, of Anne Arundel county, said that the views presented in the address of the Chairman were, in the main, those which had taken possession of his own mind. He did not see how they could be controverted, although he did hope that something might be done to lighten the burthen which must necessarily fall upon those who hold property in slaves, by the losses which would be entailed upon them by the proposed change in the system of labor. He would like to see compensation to the widows and orphans who had their capital invested in slave property.

A lengthy debate ensued, which was participated in by Col. Berry of Baltimore county, Mr. Eichelberger of Frederick county, Mr. Roberts of Montgomery county, Mr. Seidenstricker of Baltimore city, Mr. Stockett of Anne Arundel county, Mr. Clark of Prince George's county, Hon. John P. Kennedy, Hon. Wm. Price, and Mr. Swann.

During the discussion which took place upon the resolutions, Mr. Swann stated to the meeting that he had received, through the Secretary, a letter from ex-Governor Hicks, which was read as follows :

NATIONAL HOTEL, }  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 14., 1863. }

*Wm. Thomson, Esq., Secretary Union State Central Committee :*

DEAR SIR—Your notice to attend a meeting of the State Central Committee of the Union Party of Maryland, at Temperance Temple, on Wednesday, the 16th instant, is before me. I regret exceedingly that the state of my health, together with pressing public duties, will not allow me the pleasure of being present; but I beg to assure the Committee, that in reference to the subject of emancipation, on which they propose to take action, prior to the meeting of the Legislature, I am heartily with them, and deem it wise and prudent that the Committee should be convened. I need hardly say, that although not an enthusiast upon this or any other subject, I have been long an emancipationist, and my heart is with the Committee in the work; and farther, that I will give my sanction to what they may deem advisable, upon a subject so important to the State of Maryland.

Very respectfully,

THOS. H. HICKS.

The vote was then taken separately on the resolutions offered by Mr. Swann, Chairman, and after that upon those offered by Mr. Kennedy, when both were unanimously adopted.

Mr. Eichelberger, of Frederick county, then offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That the address of the Chairman of this Committee be published with the proceedings of this meeting, and that both the Address and the resolutions be recommended to the dispassionate consideration of the Union men of Maryland for their adoption.

The Committee then adjourned, subject to the call of the Chairman.